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To: tkh@tkhenry.com
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Subject: Joint Subcommittee - Human Services

EXHIBIT 6
DATE 1-28-09
HB 2

See Donna Smith

Dear Representative Teresa Henry:

I am not able to be in Helena for the January 27th Home-based and Waiver Services Committee Hearing, so I ask that you consider this letter my testimony.

I encourage you to support the recommendation (New Proposal 22223) of the DPHHS and the Governor. Their recommendation to expand Home & Community Based Services by funding 178 new Medicaid Waiver slots is desperately needed, and this expenditure receives matching federal funds.

Medicaid funded Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) is a way for low-income who need nursing quality level of care to remain in their homes. Seniors prefer to remain at home, and it saves the tax-payer money. Home based services can be provided for three people for the cost of one in a nursing facility; this is a win-win for everyone.

Montana now has over 400 people on the waiting list for a Medicaid Waiver Slot. We need your help to assure that quality long term services are available to all Montanans.

DPHHS and the Governor also recommend using \$330,000 to improve counseling and access to these services.

Before retiring, I served as the Director of the Billings Chapter Prevention of Elder Abuse for 12 years. I know that it takes a big heart, lots of patience and special training to properly Care for the elderly and people with disabilities. We must pass legislation that will provide additional Waiver slots, help retain caregivers now employed and provide incentives that will attract quality workers to care for our most vulnerable citizens.

The decision you make will determine the quality of life for people who depend upon us to protect them. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Grace D. Bowman
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